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Deirdre McLay: A Biography

McLay, Deirdre

Monterey, California, Naval Postgraduate School

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Capt. Deidre McLay, USN
Chief of Staff
Naval Postgraduate School
Monterey, California



Capt. Deidre McLay is a Surface Warfare Officer from Boulder City, Nevada. She graduated with honors from the University of Colorado in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering and was commissioned via the Naval Reserve Officer Training Corps (NROTC) program.

McLay was the commissioning Commanding Officer of the Aegis destroyer USS Farragut (DDG 99), leading the formation and training of the ship's first crew, initial outfitting, construction completion, and all systems testing and preparations for fleet operations. As a Captain, she served as Commodore, Maritime Prepositioning Ships Squadron THREE, overseeing ten ships of prepositioned war-fighting material to support contingencies in the Western Pacific, with an area of operations that included Guam, Saipan, Japan and the Republic of Korea. During her career, she completed multiple afloat deployments, including operations in the Western Pacific and Mediterranean. She deployed to the Arabian Gulf as Chief Staff Officer of Destroyer Squadron Thirty-One, embarked in USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) during the build-up to and initial execution of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Ashore, McLay served as Chief of Staff to U.S. Naval Forces Korea. She was an instructor at Surface Warfare Officers School Command, Newport, Rhode Island, where she taught leadership, amphibious operations, logistics, and deck seamanship and later served as an action officer on the Staff of the Chief of Naval Operations in the Future Ships Branch of the Director of Surface Warfare (N96). Her joint experience includes duty as Executive Assistant to the Commander, Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

McLay earned her Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School and earned her Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College, graduating with distinction. Her decorations include the Legion of Merit, the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and other personal, unit and campaign awards.

Before her assignment as Chief of Staff, McLay was a Military Associate Professor in the Operations Research Department of NPS.